

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

POLICY STATEMENT: The City of Albuquerque provides its employees the opportunity to pursue their career interest in City government if it is determined to be of mutual interest to the City and the employees. In providing this incentive, the City grants to its employee's tuition assistance and/or educational leave to attend courses for credit. The amount of tuition assistance administered is determined based on the availability of funds. The tuition assistance benefit is a reimbursement benefit.

CONDITIONS FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATIONAL LEAVE:

- 1. Employees must be classified non-probationary, unclassified with a minimum of six (6) months service, or classified part-time working 20 hours or more per work weekat the time the class(es) begin.
- 2. Courses must be for college credit, with the exception of the GED exam at CNM.
- 3. The courses or degree sought must enhance or create a skill that is either related to the employee's profession, skill, craft, or career goals, and must demonstrate a benefit to the City.
- 4. Employees receiving assistance from other sources will inform the City of the amount of such assistance when application is made with the Tuition Assistance Program. The City will provide assistance up to the amount of <u>actual</u> educational costs, less any other assistance received by the employee.
- 5. Courses taken under the Tuition Assistance Program will be taken at the employee's initiative. The employee assumes full responsibility for course selection, scheduling, and other matters that are traditionally the responsibility of the student and the educational institution.
- 6. It will be the responsibility of all employees to undergo career counseling annually with Public Service University to determine eligibility for requesting tuition assistance from the City.
- 7. If the demand for tuition assistance exceeds the availability of funds, awards will be granted in the following priority order:
 - A. Applicants for undergraduate courses, vocational courses, and GED exam.
 - B. Applicants for graduate courses.
 - C. Applicants who are seeking a second undergraduate or Master's degree.
- 8. The educational institution must be regionally recognized and certified as an accredited institution of higher learning by an accrediting body such as the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (i.e. UNM, CNM, NMSU, ENMU, UOP, NAU, Wayland). Courses requiring out-of-region institutions will be considered on a case-by-case basis as long as they are regionally accredited.
- 9. An employee participating in a program which leads toward a degree, certificate, or GED, which is verified by the Department Director may be granted educational leave up to three (3) hours per week unless otherwise stated in the employee's current collective bargaining agreement. The following criteria will be used to determine if an employee qualifies for educational leave:
 - a. Employee must be working on a full-time basis.
 - b. It is determined that the course(s) would be of benefit to the City by the Learning Council.
 - c. The employee maintains a satisfactory academic record.

- d. The employee maintains a satisfactory job performance.
- e. The course is not available outside the employee's normal work schedule.
- 10. An employee who attends school during non-working time does not require Departmental approval of the Tuition Assistance Application.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE:

- 1. The employee is solely responsible for payment of all tuition and related expenses. Reimbursement will be made for the cost of approved courses only. Proper original and/or electronic school documentation of such payment will be necessary in order to receive reimbursement.
- 2. Employee must agree to reimburse the City for any course(s) dropped or not completed. Employees must further agree to reimburse the City if they do not attain a satisfactory grade for a completed course(s) as follows:
 - A. Undergraduate C or better
 B. Graduate B or better
 - C. Skills Training C or better or certificate of satisfactory completion
- 3. Employees will be required to submit official documentation to verify their grades to the Public Service University prior to receiving assistance for the following semester.
- 4. Reimbursement may be granted up to the following maximum awards per semester as determined by the Learning Council:
 - A. 6 credit hours at UNM, NMSU, or NMHU
 - B. 6 credit hours at private, regionally accredited universities
 - C. 6 credit hours at CNM for Associate degree programs
 - D. 6 credit hours at other public institutions approved by the Learning Council
 - E. Cost of registration, books, and course material for CNM non-"Arts & Sciences" courses only
 - F. Cost of the General Educational Development (GED) exam at CNM.

Reimbursement will <u>not</u> be made for application fees, late registration fees, test requirements (with the exception of the GED exam at CNM), parking or transportation expense, fines, laboratory fees, lodging, typing fees, graduation fees, supplies, tools, equipment, books (except for CNM non-"Arts & Sciences" courses), auditing of courses, non-credit courses, seminar/workshops, practicum courses, and other similar expenses. Distance learning fees are not covered.